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## **Wildlife Conservation Board Approves \$250,000 Proposition 40 Grant to Nature Conservancy**

*Property Purchase will Preserve Habitat at La Posta Navy Training Center*

**Sacramento** — The California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) today approved a \$250,000 grant to the Nature Conservancy toward the purchase of property surrounding the La Posta Navy Mountain Warfare Training Center east of San Diego. The purchase of 370 acres of private property will provide a buffer zone around the military installation, preserve habitat and enhance wildlife movement between the Cleveland National Forest and public land to the south. The U.S. Department of Defense is expected to contribute \$695,000 toward the purchase and the Nature Conservancy will contribute \$15,000.

"Less than a year ago, I signed an agreement with the Department of Defense to implement a new partnership in California that will create a buffer around military installations and protect important wildlife and habitats," said California Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. "It's a great next step to have the Wildlife Conservation Board approve the funding to help acquire these first properties."

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Characterized by native grasslands, oak woodlands, chaparral and scrub brush, the properties to be purchased are part of a critical wildlife corridor that supports mountain lions, mule deer, bobcat and wild turkeys.

"The board approval today was a significant step towards protecting important wildlife habitats in a corridor that benefits the migration of wildlife between southern California and Northern Baja California, Mexico," said Al Wright, executive director of the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Land within the La Posta training facility replicates the environment found in Korea and parts of Iraq and Afghanistan. As a result the center plays a critical role in military training, said Michael Huber, manager of the Department of Defense's Regional Environmental Coordination Program for the Navy Region Southwest.

"The Department of Defense, for the first time, can partner with nonprofit conservation groups and state governments to create operational and natural buffers that protect active bases from the impacts of encroachment," said Huber. "It is important to note that the properties to be purchased under this authority cannot be used for training," he added.

For nearly 20 years, The Nature Conservancy has helped the military manage natural resources and comply with environmental law that protect plant and animals species on many of the military's installations around the country. In San Diego County, the Conservancy is working to create natural buffer zones around La Posta and Camp Pendleton Marine Base.